



For Immediate Release

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**King County, City of Seattle and Puget Sound Energy
urge citizens to prepare for winter storm season**

Homeowners and businesses should get ready for potential flooding, weather hazards

SEATTLE – Now that the winter storm season is upon us, three regional organizations, representing Washington state's largest county, city and energy utility, urge all residents, businesses and municipal governments to act now to protect lives and property.

King County, the City of Seattle and Puget Sound Energy today joined forces to launch the region's annual "Take Winter by Storm" campaign.

"King County is prepared to keep roads clear, buses running, and levees strong, but the public also plays an important role in planning ahead for winter weather," said King County Executive Ron Sims. "Right now, before the first storm hits, is the best time to prepare for emergencies and connect with neighbors. By creating a personal plan, locating resources and setting aside at least three days of the basic supplies you need, you'll be safer and more comfortable during any extreme weather event this winter or emergency situation year round."

Mayor Greg Nickels said Seattle in recent months has prepared for the upcoming storm season by inspecting all of the city's 39,000 storm catch basins and cleaning about one third of those. However, the public's help is still needed as the winter storms begin rolling in.

"At this time of year, the combination of changing weather and falling leaves can clog drains on a moment's notice, creating the possibility for flooding," said Nickels. "Keeping drains free of debris reduces the chance of flooding in your neighborhood and also prevents pollutants from being diverted to streams, creeks and Puget Sound."

Agencies and utilities coordinate and work to implement improved methods for a comprehensive regional response to emergencies as they learn from past winter storms and other emergencies.

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“It certainly takes planning and coordination, all of us working together to be better prepared to respond to wind storms or any event we may face,” said Puget Sound Energy

Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Bert Valdman. “This winter’s neutral weather forecast suggests the potential for unpredictable weather patterns. It’s best to be prepared for whatever Mother Nature may bring our way.”

The “Take Winter by Storm” campaign encourages every family, business, and community to be prepared before devastating rains, flooding and winds threaten the Puget Sound region.

Preparation tips include:

- Assemble an emergency kit with a battery-powered radio, flashlight, extra batteries, a first-aid kit, a fire extinguisher, bottled water and three days of non-perishable food and drinking water. Store a kit at home, work and in your car.
- Stay out of the way of flood waters. Play it safe and stay out of low-lying areas during times of heavy rains. If your basement is prone to flooding, stay out of the basement until the risk of flooding has passed.
- Keep storm drains clear to prevent flooding. Don't put grass clippings, leaves or other debris into drains, ditches, creeks, culverts, gutters or ravines. (It’s against the law.) If you live at the base of a hill or on a cliff, ensure that drainage and retaining walls are in good shape. Preventative planting can also help reduce the chance of a mud slide or flooding.
- Sign up for Seattle’s “Adopt-A-Drain” program. Contact the program at (206) 684-7647 or email adoptadrain@seattle.gov. Participants will be provided with free gloves, bags, brooms, rakes, and safety vests, as well as help with leaf disposal.
- Maintain gutters and downspouts. Twice a year, clean your gutters and the drainage downspouts attached to your roof. Direct flows from downspouts away from your home, without discharging flows to adjacent properties.
- Get snow route information for driving and transit in advance of roads being closed.
- Do not use charcoal or a gas grill to cook indoors. Carbon monoxide can be deadly.
- Establish an out-of-area contact for family members to call should the local phone system be out of service.

Through the end of December, public service announcements on local television and radio stations, as well as broadcast news, King County, the City of Seattle, and PSE Web sites, will remind residents to prepare for winter weather. The Web site, www.takewinterbystorm.org, which will be up year-round, provides preparation and safety tips and links to regional resources for information about the weather, power outages, flooding, shelters and assistance agencies.

About Take Winter by Storm

Sponsored by King County, the City of Seattle and Puget Sound Energy, “Take Winter by Storm” is a public awareness campaign designed to help citizens and businesses get prepared and stay informed when bad weather strikes. For information about how to prepare for bad weather and what to do when storms do come our way, as well as accessing links to resources with information about road and pass conditions, transit snow plans, flooding conditions, coping with power disruptions and preparing for emergencies in the greater Seattle-King County area, visit takewinterbystorm.org.

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